



# Preparing for the COVID-19 PHE Unwinding Where we are now...

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ALABAMA MEDICAID AGENCY

# Meeting Agenda

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**Welcome** (Stephanie Azar, Commissioner of Alabama Medicaid)

**Communications** (Melanie Cleveland, Communications Director)

- Timeline for the National COVID-19 PHE
- What is COVID-19 Unwinding?
- Yellow Postcard Campaign
- Medicaid Partner Toolkit

**COVID-19 Unwinding Plan for Eligibility Processes** (Gretel Felton, Deputy Commissioner)

- Unwinding Approach
- Validations
- Eligibility Waivers
- Team Effort

# National COVID-19 PHE

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- March 13, 2020 - National COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) began
- Recipients have maintained Medicaid coverage during the PHE
- Only removed if they request to be taken off, are deceased, or move out of state
- July 15, 2022 - PHE was extended 90 days by HHS secretary
- End of the PHE means redetermination of coverage for recipients who have kept coverage for over two years

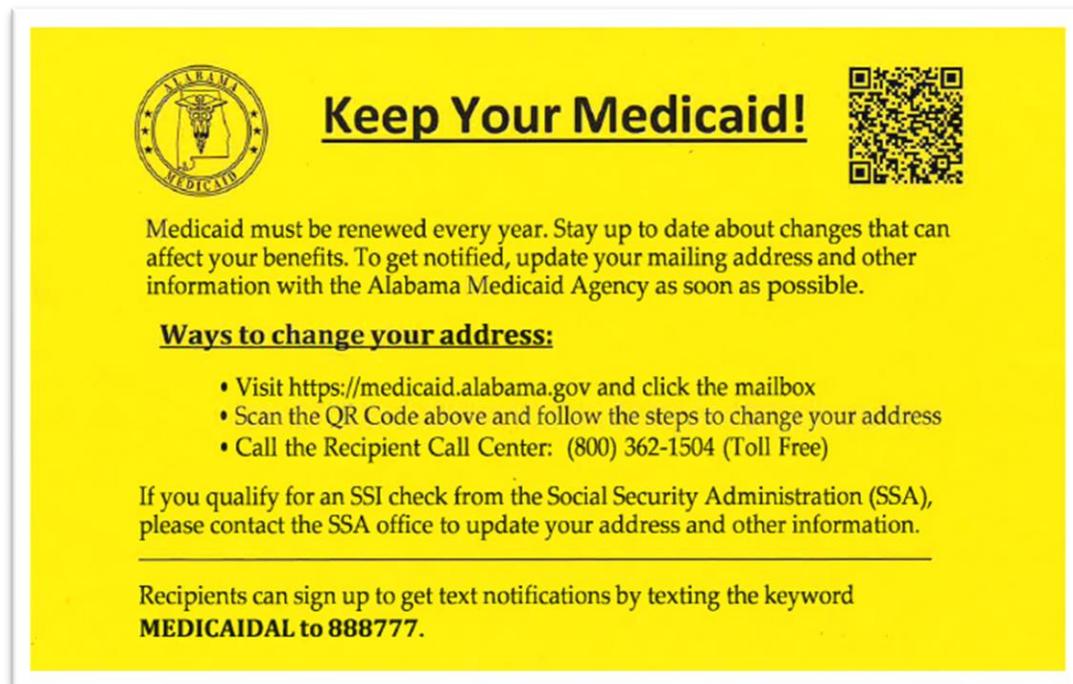
# What is COVID-19 Unwinding?

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- Preparation for the end of the PHE is referred to as “unwinding”
- The Agency has regular discussions internally and with CMS for planning
- Simple message to communicate to recipients:
  - **“Recipients need to keep their address and other contact information up to date with Alabama Medicaid so they can receive notice about the time to reapply or when there are benefit changes.”**

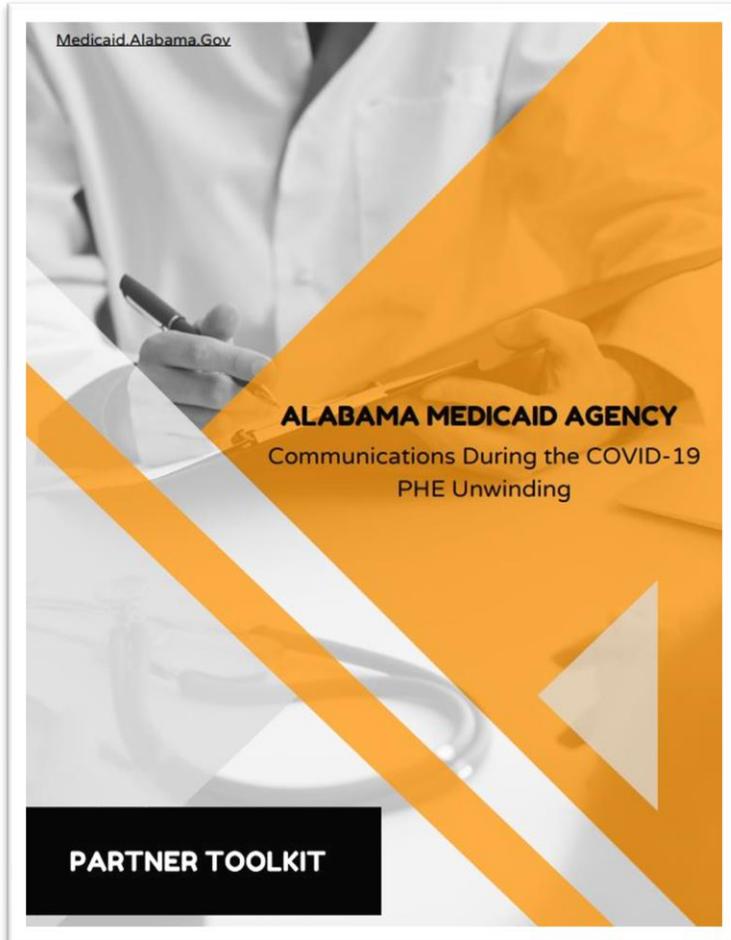
# Yellow Postcard Campaign

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- Yellow postcards include directions for recipients to update their addresses with the Agency
- Postcards delivered to provider offices and pharmacies through academic detailers
- Postcards posted in Medicaid district offices, outstation worker offices, FQHCs, RHCs, and public health departments
- ACHN care coordinators, waiver case managers, and caseworkers with partner agencies received these postcards to display in their workstations
- Providers, pharmacies, and other providers can assist by posting the yellow postcard at their check-in or checkout counters
- Medicaid recipients can scan the QR code to take the information with them

# Medicaid Partner Toolkit



- Alabama Medicaid's key messages for recipients
- Toolkit available at [www.Medicaid.Alabama.gov](http://www.Medicaid.Alabama.gov); Select "Providers" and "COVID-19 Information for Providers"
- Phase 1: Get Ready
- Phase 2: Check Your Mail
- Phase 3: Renew
- Application Assister Training
- FAQs

# Other Agency Messaging

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- Provider webpage for COVID-related updates and information:  
[https://medicaid.alabama.gov/content/7.0\\_Providers/7.11\\_COVID-19\\_Vaccine\\_Providers.aspx](https://medicaid.alabama.gov/content/7.0_Providers/7.11_COVID-19_Vaccine_Providers.aspx)
- Information for recipients to update their address and other information with the Agency is available at [https://medicaid.alabama.gov/content/11.0\\_Recipient/11.10\\_Update\\_Address.aspx](https://medicaid.alabama.gov/content/11.0_Recipient/11.10_Update_Address.aspx)
- Recipients can find COVID-19 information from the Agency at [https://medicaid.alabama.gov/content/11.0\\_Recipient/11.8\\_COVID-19\\_Vaccine\\_Info\\_for\\_Recipients.aspx](https://medicaid.alabama.gov/content/11.0_Recipient/11.8_COVID-19_Vaccine_Info_for_Recipients.aspx)
- Link sent out as a text notification to the recipient list
- Link shared on the Agency's Facebook page



# Alabama Medicaid COVID-19 Unwinding Plan for Eligibility Processes

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# Alabama Medicaid Unwinding Approach

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## Hybrid approach:

- Renewals by current renewal month, as needed
- Transition individuals to a different eligibility group, if possible
- Prioritize renewals for individuals likely to be ineligible if possible
- Disability related vs. Non-disability related
  - Different approach for Disability related groups
  - Special consideration for SSI and DHR recipients \*\*\*\*

# Eligibility Validations

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- Income (SSA tax data and unearned income, IRS, real-time employer data through federal hub, Office of Child Support Enforcement; State data exchange, VA, DHR)
- Citizenship/identity (Department of Homeland Security, US immigration, SSA)
- SSN validation (SSA)
- Veteran's benefits (VA, PARIS— Public Assistance Reporting and Information Systems)
- Medicare (SSA, Medicare database)
- Birth records (vital statistics)
- Death records (SSA, Vital statistics)
- Address validation (USPS)
- Third Party Insurance (Insurance databases)
- Eligibility in other states (PARIS)
- Medical verification of disability

# Resource Validations

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- Bank accounts (Review previous 60 months for hidden or transferred assets)
- Other financial accounts (IRA's, 401K's, mutual funds)
- CD's
- Automobiles, trailers, motorcycles, boats, or other motorized vehicles
- Stocks
- Bonds
- Promissory notes
- Property
- Mineral rights, timber rights
- Trusts, annuities
- Insurance policies (life, burial)
- Value of livestock, equipment
- Any resource that can be converted to cash...

# Eligibility Waivers requested or approved:

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## State Plan Amendment request:

- *Requesting 12-months postpartum coverage for pregnant recipients to become effective October 1, 2022*

## 1902(e)(14)(A) Waiver approved:

- *Renewal Based on SNAP Eligibility: Pregnant recipients, Plan First, children under 19*
- *Renewal Based on TANF Eligibility: Low-income parents*
- *Ex Parte Renewal: for individuals with no income and no data returned*
- *Facilitating Renewal: for individuals with no Asset Verification System (AVS) data returned within a reasonable time frame*
- *Possibly extended time frame: to take final administrative action on Fair Hearing requests*

# Special unwinding efforts

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## Using EX-Parte Renewals

- Children transferred from Medicaid to ALL Kids if family income has increased
- RRV automated system renewal through the federal hub
- Children leaving foster care automatically provided former foster care Medicaid when they turn 19
- Automatic transition from one Medicare Savings program to another when income changes
- Automatic transition to Medicare Savings Program if income changes for a Medicare beneficiary or for a Medicare Beneficiary who becomes ineligible for full Medicaid
- Transfer SSI individuals in nursing homes or waivers who are no longer eligible under SSI rules

# Enhanced Staffing/Assistance for Processing

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- Continue to fill vacancies quickly
- Augment Beneficiary staff with retired state employees
- Take vacancies from Central Office and transfer to district offices, as needed
- Possible use contractual assistance to process cases, as needed
- Assistance from ALL Kids in processing MAGI applications
- Use of Application assisters to assist beneficiaries

# Medicaid Team Effort

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- Working with Communications Division to get the message out to:
  - Recipients, providers, advocates, and the general public
- Working with IT Department for data, system changes for eligibility processes
- Working with Human Resources to get positions filled as quickly as possible, transferring positions as needed
- Working with Training Unit to get new employees trained quickly
- Working with Analytics Division to ensure data analytics are provided and performance indicators and reporting requirements are met
- Using ACHN's to assist in notifying recipients and getting updated recipient addresses or other changes
- Working with Project Management Office to record and keep track of the project activities
- Working with Legal Division to schedule and handle requests for fair hearings or case reviews

# How Can You Help?

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- Share Medicaid's Key Messages with Medicaid Recipients and Partners
- Train staff to be Application Assisters

# Training for Application Assisters

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Medicaid Application Assister Certification enables a person to:

- Assist the recipient in completing the online Medicaid application
- Receive eligibility results within 30 minutes of completing the online application

Agency Training:

- Attend a virtual 1-hour webinar
- Complete a Security Agreement form
- Receive a Certificate of Completion
- Attend further training to certify other individuals to become Medicaid Application Assisters

To Sign Up for Training:

- Contact Marie Dean, Associate Director of Training
- By email: [Marie.Dean@medicaid.alabama.gov](mailto:Marie.Dean@medicaid.alabama.gov)
- By Phone: (334) 242-1797

# Questions?

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